

mental health

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June 4, 1998

The Honorable Thomas A. Daschle  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol Room 221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daschle:

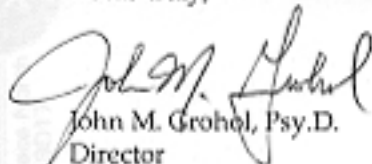
On behalf of Mental Health Net, I am writing to express our strong support and endorsement of the "Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998" (S. 1890/H.R. 3605).

This proposal provides essential and long-overdue protections to consumers in the private health insurance marketplace. Specifically, we are pleased to see provisions included which remove arbitrary limits on services, guarantee access to specialty care, and ensure the quality of the doctor-patient relationships by removing "gag rules" from doctors' contracts. We believe the inclusion of quality criteria and clinical outcome measures will increase both quality of care and accountability.

The bill also reforms the utilization review process to require the use of trained personnel and holds health plans accountable for their decisions. We are pleased with the guarantees afforded to individuals to go outside of their plan for needed medications when medically appropriate, and a timely and independent appeals process.

We appreciate your strong leadership on these issues and look forward to the enactment of these essential consumer protections this year.

Yours truly,

  
John M. Grohol, Psy.D.  
Director